

Message Text

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71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4081

PASS TO SECRETARY SIMON'S PARTY

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, TECH, IS

SUBJECT: U.S. - ISRAEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--

DESALTING PROJECT

1. DURING SECRETARY SIMON'S VISIT PRIME MINISTER RABIN AND OTHER MINISTERS STRESSED PRESSING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLY, NOTING THAT ISRAEL HAS ALREADY REACHED 95PERCENT UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE WATER. PRIME MINISTER TOLD SECRETARY THAT HE HAS LONG HAD SPECIAL INTEREST IN PROBLEM OF WATER AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT U.S. CAN ASSIST ISRAEL WITH ITS DESALTING PROGRAM. SECRETARY PROMISED TO LOOK INTO MATTER AFTER HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

2. AS FOLLOW-UP TO SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, AID, ROBERT NOOTER, WHO WAS MEMBER OF SECRETARY'S PARTY, AND EMBOFFS DOZIER AND CHINN MET ON JULY 18 WITH ELIEZER TAL, DIRECTOR ISRAEL NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT(NCRD) AND GIDEON LEVITE, HEAD TECHNOLOGY DIVISION(NCRD). NOOTER EXPLAINED THAT HE WISHED TO TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FIRST HAND OF CURRENT STATUS OF ISRAELIS DESALTING PROGRAM.

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3. TAL REFERRED TO U.S. ISRAEL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

SIGNED NOVEMBER, 1972 WHICH PROVIDED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 1 MILLION GALLON PER DAY PLANT AT EILAT, A TEST MODULE AT SAN DIEGO CALIFORNAI 110 MILLION GALLON PER DAY PLANT AT ASHDOD AND FIVE YEARS OPERATIONAL TESTING. U.S. WAS TO SHARE COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$20 MILLION.

4. THE FIRST PHASE EILAT PLANT IS NOW OPERATING ROUTINELY (SEE TEL AVIV A-142). HOWEVER, SINCE THE SAN DIEGO FACILITY IS NOW CLOSED, TAL AND LEVITE PROPOSE THAT THE TEST MODULE BE BUILT AT ASHDOD ON THE SITE OF THE EVENTUAL 11MGD PLANT. ALTHOUGH EILAT PLANT IS WORKING WELL, THEY BELIEVE TEST MODULE PHASE IS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE IN SCALE-UP. TEST MODULE WOULD CONSIST OF TWO DESALINATION CHAMBERS. UPON COMPLETION OF TESTS, THESE UNITS WOULD BECOME PART OF FINAL ASHDOD PLANT CONTAINING 11 UNITS. ECONOMIES OF TIME AND MONEY WOULD RESULT FROM CONSTRUCTION OF TEST MUDLE AT ASHDOD RATHER THAN SAN DIEGO.

5. TAL AND LEVITE EMPAHISIZED CRITICAL NATURE OF SCHEDULING. LONG LEAD TIMES NECESSARY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF DUAL PURPOSE REACTORS, ESPECIALLY FOR PROPOSED 100 MGD PLANT OF EARLY 80S. DELAYS AT THIS STAGE COULD SERIOUSLY DELAY OR ALTER LONG TERM PROGRAM.

6. ISRAEL HAS BEGUN DESING STUDIES FOR TEST MODULE AND ASHDOD PLANT. FUNDS ARE AVAIBLEABE FOR THIS " PAPER AND PENCIL" PHASE, BUT CRITICAL STAGE WILL OCCUR IN NEXT FISCAL YEAR (APRIL, 1975) WHEN CONSTRUCTION DUE TO BEGIN. TAL UNCERTAIN CONSTRUCTION CAN BE STARTED WITHOUT U.S.ASSISTANCE.

7 . DISCUSSION IMPLIED THAT PLANT WOULD BE ALMOST ENTIRELY ISRAELI DESIGN WITH ONLY MINOR INPUT FROM AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY; E.G., METALS AND OTHR MATERIALS TECHNOLOGY. MAJOR ISRAELI NEED IS FINANCIAL RATHER THAN TECHNICAL, ALTHOUGH ISRAELIS BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE IMPORTANT MUTUAL ADVANTAGE IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON PROJECT.

8. LEVITE STATED COST OF WATER FROM EILAT PLANT APPROXIMATELY 5 IL/CUM(\$4.80/1000 GALLONS). THIS INCLUDES R&D COSTS IN AIS THUS HIGHER THAN FIGURE GIVEN SCIATT EARLIER
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BY PLANT ENGINEER (\$3.30/1000GALLONS). ESTIMATED COST FOR 11 MGD PLANT IS APPROXMATELY \$1/1000 GALLONS. SUCH WATER SOULD BE EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE FOR IRRIGATION BUT COULD BE USED TO DILUTE SOURCES NOW TOO SALINE FOR IRRIGATION (FROM SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS, BRACKISH WATER, ETC.) LEVITE SAID NEW WATER SOURCES IN ISRAEL ALREADY APPROACH THIS COST.

9. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE ISRAELI REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE
IN THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. IT
NOT ONLY OF GREAT INTEREST TO ISRAELIS, FROM PRIME MINISTER
ON DOWN, BUT APPEARS TO FALL MOST APPROPRIATELY WITHIN
FRAMEWORK OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION EMBODIED IN PRESIDENT'S
JOINT STATEMENT OF JUNE 17, IF PROJECT IS SUCCESSFUL,
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED THEREFROM WILL OF COURSE BE OF GENERAL
INTEREST. MOREOVER, COMMERICAL OPPORTUNITIES WOULD PRESUMABLY
BE AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN FIRMS,
ESPECIALLY FOR ALUMINUM TUBING, SINCE LARGE PLANTS WILL
REQUIRE SEVERAL THOUSAND KILOMETERS OF TUBING.
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